Literary Essay assignment

Choose a story from one of your anthologies, or provide me with a copy of the story you want to use. Use this story for examples to support one of the following choices. You must develop a thesis statement based on the essay question asked. I have given you possible opening statements and thesis statements. You can use these or develop your own based on the question. Remember to add the “so what” to the thesis statement you develop. (why should people care?)

1. One of the most revealing types of conflict occurs when a character’s inner struggles are resolved at great personal price. Often, the character learns a lesson, but too late to help themselves or another character. Explain how, in the work that you read, a character struggles but fails to learn a lesson in time, and thus, serves as an example for the reader. In your essay, focus on the conflict within the character. Be sure to include the price paid as part of the resolution and the lesson to be learned.

**Possible Opening statement:**

Often in literature authors make use of a character’s inner struggles, and the lessons they learn to serve as an example for the reader. Such is the case in (name of story/novel).

**Possible Thesis example**: In (name of story/novel the struggles of (name of character) are utilized by the author to illustrate (life lesson being shown) for the reader.

1. Often in literary works, authors choose a physical object which takes on a special significance in the work and becomes a symbol of something beyond itself. Show how, in the work that you read, the author uses a symbol to convey an important meaning. In your essay, focus on the symbol and what it symbolizes. Be sure to discuss how the author uses it to convey a message to readers. You may choose three important symbols from the novel, or you may choose to elaborate on one symbol in all three body paragraphs.

**Possible Opening statement:**

Often in literature authors make use of physical objects as symbols to convey an important meaning. Such is the case in (name of story/novel).

**Possible Thesis example**: In (name of story/novel one object used to symbolize (what is the meaning) is (object used as a symbol).

1. Authors often use descriptive details to develop a setting for several purposes. In an essay, explain how the setting of your book related to events from the plot, related to characters, or built suspense. You may write one body paragraph about each aspect of setting, or you may choose to elaborate on one particular aspect (plot, character, suspense) in all three body paragraphs.

**Possible Opening statement:**

Often in literature authors make use of descriptive details in their setting for specific purposes. Such is the case in (name of story/novel).

**Possible Thesis example**: In (name of story/novel the setting is used by the author to (what is it used to do (and in what areas of the story)

1. What is the theme of the story? In your introduction, state the theme of the novel. In your thesis, explain how the theme is developed. In your body paragraphs, give specific examples of scenes/events/characters etc. from the story in which the author developed the theme.

**Possible Opening statement:**

Often in literature the author’s intention is to elaborate upon a specific theme. Such is the case in (name of story/novel).

**Possible Thesis example**: In (name of story/novel the theme (what is the theme) is illustrated by (how is it illustrated and proven).

1. Discuss the author’s use of figurative language. Identify three examples of figurative language from the novel. Why did the author use these examples? What impact does the figurative language have on characterization, description of setting, mood, foreshadowing, theme, or the novel overall? In your essay, use a different example in each body paragraph. Be sure to explain the significance of each use of figurative language.

**Possible Opening statement:**

Often in literature authors makes use of figurative language to create certain impacts for the reader. Such is the case in (name of story/novel).

**Possible Thesis example**: In (name of story/novel the author uses (what types of figurative language have they used) to (what were these types of figurative language used for) for the reader.

Steps to take

1. Choose your topic
2. Choose a story you think will fit your essay topic.
3. Formulate a thesis statement - Remember to add the “so what” to the thesis statement you develop. (why should people care?)
4. Take notes on reasons/examples that will fit your essay topic
5. Think of 3 main reasons that will support your thesis statement based on the story. These will form the focus of each main body paragraph.
6. Find 2 specific examples to support each of those reasons.
7. Create an essay outline and add explanations for your reasons.
8. Write your introduction- create an opening statement- include the name of the story and author, and a bit of background context in relation to your thesis from the story. Include your thesis statement. Include your 3 main reasons.
9. Write your body paragraphs. Make sure each one has a topic sentence linking back to one of three main ideas in your introduction. Make sure each one has specific reasons, examples and explanations to support your points. Make sure you have a conclusion sentence.
10. Write your conclusion. Make sure you have restated your thesis in a new way. Make sure you have drawn a conclusion on the “so what” part of your thesis. Make sure your have re-emphasized your main reasons that were elaborated on in your introduction.

Story possibilities for essay topic choices:

1. Explain how, in the work that you read, a character struggles but fails to learn a lesson in time, and thus, serves as an example for the reader.
   1. “The Necklace” by Guy de Maupassant in Discovering Fiction on p. 492
   2. “The Masque of the Red Death” by Edgar Allan Poe on p. 197 in Inside Stories

(look up “The Bet” by Anton Chekhov on my website)

1. Show how, in the work that you read, the author uses a symbol to convey an important meaning.
   1. “The Jade Peony” By Wayson Choy in Inside Stories on p. 35
   2. “The Yellow Wallpaper” by Charlotte Gilman in Discovering Fiction on p. 196.
   3. “The Masque of the Red Death” by Edgar Allan Poe on p. 197 in Inside Stories
   4. “Holding things together” by Anne Tyler on p. 205 in Inside Stories

(see stories under Symbol in Discovering Fiction)

1. In an essay, explain how the setting of your book related to events from the plot, related to characters, or built suspense.
   1. “There Will Come Soft Rains” by Ray Bradbury in Discovering Fiction on p. 77.
   2. “The Cask of Amontillado” by Edgar Allen Poe in Discovering Fiction on p. 556.
   3. “The Ultimate Safari” by Nadine Gordimer on p.121 in Inside Stories

(See “Survival Ship” by Judith Merrill on my website)

1. In your thesis, explain how the theme is developed.
   1. “War” by Luigi Pirandello on p. 27 in Inside Stories
   2. “The Guest” by Albert Camus on p. 72 in Inside Stories
   3. “The Lottery” by Shirley Jackson on p. 144 in Inside Stories
   4. “The Destructors” by Graham Greene on p.157 in Inside Stories
   5. “Totem” by Thomas King on p. 386 in Inside Stories

(See “Survival Ship” by Judith Merrill on my website) (see stories under Theme in Discovering Fiction)

1. What impact does the figurative language have on characterization, description of setting, mood, foreshadowing, theme, or the novel overall?
   1. “The Snow Walker” by Farley Mowat in Discovering Fiction on p. 527.
   2. “Imagine a Day at the End of your life” by Ann Beattie in Inside Stories on p. 44.
   3. “Rain” by Maurice Kenny on pg. 252 in Inside Stories
   4. The Painted Door by Sinclair Rosson pg. 366 in Inside Stories

(see stories under Style in Discovering Fiction)